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bestsellers

A list of national bestsellers compiled by Publishers Weekly

HARDCOVER

FICTION

1. **PORT MORTUARY,** by Patricia Cornwell (Putnam)
2. **THE CONFESSION,** by John Grisham (Doubleday)
3. **CROSS FIRE,** by James Patterson (Little, Brown)
4. **FULL DARK, NO STARS,** by Stephen King (Scribner)
5. **THE GIRL WHO KICKED THE HORNET'S NEST,** by Stieg Larsson (Knopf)
6. **HELL'S CORNER,** by David Baldacci (Grand Central)
7. **FALL OF GIANTS,** by Ken Follett (Dutton)
8. **CRESCENT DAWN,** by Clive Cussler and Dirk Cussler (Putnam)
9. **SAFE HAVEN,** by Nicholas Sparks (Grand Central)
10. **SQUIRREL SEEKS CHIPMUNK,** by David Sedaris (Little, Brown)

NONFICTION

1. **DECISION POINTS,** by George W. Bush (Crown)
2. **AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK TWAIN,** edited by Harriet Elinor Smith (University of California Press)
3. **UNBROKEN,** by Laura Hillenbrand (Random House)
4. **LIFE,** by Keith Richards (Little, Brown)
5. **AMERICA BY HEART,** by Sarah Palin (Harper)
6. **DECODED,** by Jay-Z (Spiegel & Grau)
7. **BAREFOOT CONTESSA HOW EASY IS THAT?,** by Ina Garten (Clarkson Potter)
8. **BROKE,** by Glenn Beck (Threshold)
9. **EARTH (THE BOOK),** by Jon Stewart (Grand Central)
10. **I REMEMBER NOTHING,** by Nora Ephron (Knopf)

PAPERBACK

1. **THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO,** by Stieg Larsson (Vintage)
2. **INSIDE OF A DOG,** by Alexandra Horwitz (Scribner)
3. **THE GIRL WHO PLAYED WITH FIRE,** by Stieg Larsson (Vintage)
4. **EAT, PRAY, LOVE,** by Elizabeth Gilbert (Penguin)
5. **HOUSE RULES,** by Jodi Picoult (Washington Square Press)
6. **HAPPY EVER AFTER,** by Nora Roberts (Berkley)
7. **THE ART OF RACING IN THE RAIN,** by Garth Stein (Harper)
8. **CUTTING FOR STONE,** by Abraham Verghese (Vintage)
9. **LITTLE BEE,** by Chris Cleave (Simon & Schuster)
10. **THE BOOK OF AWAKENING,** by Mark Nepo (Conari Press)

bookshelf

SMALL PRESS FICTION

BY MARION WINIK
Special to Newsday

In 1973, small was beautiful. This year, small is hot. The National Book Award recently went to a novel published by the tiny McPherson & Co., Jaimy Gordon's "Lord of Misrule," and one of the four runners-up was from Coffeehouse Press. Earlier this year, the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction went to "Tinkers" by Paul Harding, from Bellevue Literary Press. We took a look at three other recent small-press titles that have been getting some love. The trio has little in common except the noncorporate nature of their publishers, but maybe that's just the point.

Set in the 1990s in the Pacific Northwest, **"The Orange Eats Creeps"** by Grace Krilanovich (Two Dollar Radio, $16 paper) contains the hallucinatory, disjointed, plotless, yet bizarrely charming ravings of a young refugee from foster care who now belongs to a pack of teenage hobo vampires that rove convenience stores and supermarkets high on Robitussin and mop buckets of coffee. These feral, trashed-out bloodsuckers have nothing to do with the "Twilight" crowd, devoid as they are of sex appeal or commercial potential. Though the nameless narrator is supposedly searching for her missing foster sister, Kim, that quest loses steam. But some readers will stay with her for aperçus like this: "Truckers are mustachioed weirdos. They sleep in tiny apartments wedged between their big-ass engine and whatever they've got hitched back there. . . . The foster-care industry directly feeds into the trucker industry. They're basically grooming personnel to occupy these positions over the course of many generations. I don't need to mention that the foster-care industry sustains the trucking economy with Roadside Slut Camps to quell workplace dissatisfaction." While one can't exactly recommend "The Orange Eats Creeps" to the general public, one hopes its gifted author will make some concessions to the notion of plot in future works. Warning: There's no explanation of the cryptic title anywhere in the book: Is "orange" being used as an adjective or a noun? Are "eats" and "creeps" nouns or verbs?

Lisa Dierbeck has secrets to tell in "The Autobiography of Jenny X."

"The Cannibal of Guadalajara" by David Winner (Gival Press, $20 paper) is a quirky comedy of manners set in New York and Mexico. Its central character is Margaret, a realistically drawn, sympathetic over-50 divorcee, whom we first encounter feeling ungainly and out of place at a singles bar in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. To her surprise, a dark and handsome young man appears to woo her, bringing her martinis and returning to her apartment. She and Dante begin seeing each other, though he soon reveals himself to be ridiculously stubborn and deeply damaged by the childhood experiences that give the book its title. By then, however, Margaret has fallen in love with his charming upper-class Mexican immigrant family in Brooklyn, in whose elegant home they dine every Friday night. Meanwhile, her ex-husband, Alfred, reappears, first via e-mail dispatches from his world travels, then on her doorstep. A road trip and a platonic, quasi-familial menage a trois ensue. Warning: The book is marred by a gloomy, amateurish cover and poor copy editing, though at times the typos add to the humor, as when a character's "huge breasts overflow unappealingly from her glittery brazier."

Lisa Dierbeck's **"The Autobiography of Jenny X"** (Mischief + Mayhem/OR Books, $16) — the first title from a print-on-demand publishing collective by the author, Dale Peck and others — is a tale of secrets and lies unraveled. "Are you cheating on me?" asks oncologist Dan Orsini of his wife, an heiress named Nadia Tatiana Larina, the mother of his three children. He has good reason to think so, as Nadia recently missed her own birthday party and Dan has intercepted a package addressed to "Jenny X" in care of his wife from a penitentiary in New York State. As Nadia is an extremely practiced liar, only the reader learns that the man she's preoccupied with is Christopher Benedict, a senator's son imprisoned 20 years ago for a revolutionary action gone awry. Though Dan and Nadia are a little on the cardboard side, Christopher Benedict is less appealing than he should be, and it's nobody's "autobiography" in any way, "The Autobiography of Jenny X" is a page-turner with lots of sharp cultural observation. For example, when Christopher emerges from his cell into society, he is befuddled to observe the new social order. "The yogis weren't hippies as he might have supposed. They were hedge fund managers. Meanwhile, the druggies weren't sensualists or rebels. . . . They were glassy-eyed pathetic deadbeats no one would speak to. . . . Insanity and self-inflicted poverty, both highly admirable goals in Christopher's day, were now anathema." Warning: Don't faint, the book has a happy ending.

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